

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1163

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PINT

SUBJ: CENSORSHIP, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE PORTUGUESE PRESS

REF: LISBON A-93 DATED 8/6/74

1. DIARIO DE NOTICIAS, PORTUGAL'S LARGEST CIRCULATING DAILY NEWSPAPER, RAN A TWO-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT NOVEMBER 25 CONTAINING THE PROGRAM OF THE CENTER-RIGHT CDS PARTY. ITS SISTER NEWSPAPER IN OPORTO, JOURNAL DE NOTICIAS, IS THE ONLY OTHER PAPER THUS FAR TO DO SO.

2. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO A HIGHLY PLACED SOURCE IN DIARIO DE NOTICIAS, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO VITOR ALVES CALLED IN THE EDITORS OF THE PAPER AND TOLD THEM THAT IF DN DIDN'T RUN THE ADVERTISEMENT, THE BULLENTIN OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT WOULD CARRY IT. ALVES REPORTEDLY TOLD THE EDITORS THAT IF THERE WAS GOING TO BE CENSORSHIP IN THE PORTUGUESE PRINT MEDIA, THE EDITORS OUGHT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT WHO WOULD DO THE CENSORING. IT WOULD BE THE AFM, ALVES SAID, NOT THE PRESS ITSELF. THE ISSUE OF WHETHER OR NOT DN WOULD RUN THE CDS PROGRAM WAS THEN PUT TO A VOTE OF DN EMPLOYEES. SOME MRPP TYPES IN THE PRINT SHOP VOTED NOT TO CARRY IT, BUT THE EDITORIAL SATFF, SUPPORTED BY OTHER BLUE COLLAR WORKERS IN THE PRINT SHOP BELONGING TO THE

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PCP, VOTED TO RUN THE ADVERTISEMENT.

3. DIARIO DE NOTICIAS IS THE MOST BALANCED DAILY NEWSPAPER IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS STAFFED BY JOURNALISTS FROM THE POLITICAL CENTER AND MODERATE SOCIALISTS. IT GIVES THE NEWS FAIRLY AND AVOIDS SENSATIONALISM. DN REPORTERS ARE BEGINNING TO CHECK OUT STORIES AND THEIR COPY IS SUBMITTED TO FAIRLY HARDNOSED EDITING. IT HAS AN OP-ED PAGE WHERE A VARIETY OF OPINIONS ARE EXPRESSED, INCLUDING A RECENT ARTICLE ON DEMOCRACY BY CDS SECRETARY GENERAL AMARO DA COSTA. POLITICALLY MODERATE AND EXPERIENCED JOURNALISTS FROM OTHER PAPERS, NOTABLY O SECULO, ARE JOINING DN'S REPORTORIAL STAFF. THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECOGNIZED THIS DEVELOPMENT AND IS DISCREETLY TRYING TO SUPPORT IT, HAVING IN MIND THE POSSIBILITY THAT IF DN CAN ESTABLISH A REPUTATION FOR OBJECTIVITY, ACCURACY, AND COMPLETENESS, IT MAY SET A STANDARD FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRESS WITH KEEN INTEREST. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG, FREE PRESS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE CREATION OF A WESTERN-STYLE, CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL.
SCOTT

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